NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
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MARK HOPKINS/MUNICH

MOSCOW AND ITS DISSIDENTS

ANNCR:

FOR A BACKGROUND REPORT ON MOSCOW'S HANDLING OF THE DISSIDENT PROBLEM HERE IS VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS IN OUR EUROPEAN BUREAU.

VOICE:

THE FIRST TRIAL IS FINISHED. TWO MORE ARE TO COME, IN WHAT EXILED SOVIET DISSIDENTS AND A GOOD MANY FOREIGN ANALYSTS OF SOVIET AFFAIRS BELIEVE IS A PLANNED KREMLIN CAMPAIGN TO CRUSH POLITICAL DISSENT.

THE CONVICTION OF YURI ORLOV, AND THE HARSH MAXIMUM SENTENCE OF SEVEN YEARS IN A LA-BOR CAMP, IS MEANT TO SAY THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WILL NOT TOLERATE UNOFFICIAL CITIZENS' EXAMINATIONS OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THAT WAS WHAT PHYSICIST YURI ORLOV WAS DOING AS A FOUNDER OF A SMALL MOSCOW GROUP THAT USED THE THIRTY FIVE NATION HELSINKI AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE PARTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO EXPOSE VIOLATIONS OF THE RULE OF LAW IN THE SOVIET UNION.

TWO MORE TRIALS OF SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE ARE EXPECTED. THE NEXT WILL LIKELY SEE ALEXANDER GINZBURG BROUGHT INTO COURT. HE HAD BEEN FUNNELING MONEY FROM EXILED SOVIET AUTHOR ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN TO FAMILIES OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS. THEN THERE IS THE SHCHARANSKY CASE. THE THIRTY YEAR OLD SHCHARANSKY, A JEWISH ACTIVIST, HAS BEEN TIED TO AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS, TO U.S. DIPLOMATS, AND TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

THE IMPLICIT WARNING TO SOVIET CITIZENS -- BEWARE OF CONTACTS WITH FOREIGNERS, AMONG THEM THE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WHO ARE PUBLICISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION.

THE KREMLIN'S VIEW WAS PUT SUCCINTLY BY A MOSCOW NEWSPAPER -- MOSKOVOSKAYA PRAVDA -- IN A COMMENTARY ON MISTER ORLOV. MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA SAID SIMPLY THAT MISTER ORLOV HAD OVERSTEPPED THE LIMITS TO EXPRESS ONE'S VIEW FREELY, THAT HE CALLED FOR UNDERMINING THE SOVIET SYSTEM.

MANY OF THE SOVIET DISSIDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN EXILED IN RECENT YEARS, SAY THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF CHANGING THE BASIC SOVIET SYSTEM. THEY WANT EXISTING SOVIET LAWS OBSERVED, THEY ARGUE, BY THE AUTHORITIES WHO ADOPTED THEM.

BUT APPARENTLY THIS IS NOT HOW THE KREMLIN SEES THE SMALL CLUSTERS OF DISSIDENTS. FROM THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP'S POINT OF VIEW -- AS THE MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA COMMENTARY EXPRESSED IT QUITE DIRECTLY -- MISTER ORLOV AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WHAT HE REPRESENTS IS A THREAT TO THE SYSTEM.

AND SO IT APPEARS NOW THAT THE LEADERSHIP, AFTER MONTHS OF INVESTIGATION AND DELAY, HAS BEGUN A SERIES OF MAJOR POLITICAL TRIALS TO SERVE AS LESSONS TO THE SOVIET UNION'S OWN CITIZENRY, AND TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AS WELL.

JS/RCS